

# Executive Management Council

*July 15, 2020*

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# Interim Learning Agenda Update

**David Bloom**  
*Deputy Chief Financial Officer*

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## Agenda

- Learning Agenda
- Interim Learning Agenda Focus Areas
  - Improving Drinking Water Compliance
  - Workforce
  - Grant Commitments Met
- Questions/Discussion

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# Learning Agenda

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# What is a Learning Agenda

- Priority questions (policy, regulatory, or programmatic) that, once answered, will support the Agency in achieving its mission.
- Evidence and data-building activities the Agency will undertake to answer these priority questions.

The first full learning agenda will be developed in coordination with the Agency's next strategic plan (FY 2022-2026).



## Major Milestones

### What We have Done So Far:

- **December 2019:** COO/EMC input and Administrator decisions on Learning Agenda Priority Focus
- **February 2020:** Learning Priority Leads named and work begun to develop priority questions for the interim learning agenda.
- **April 2020:** kick-off of Agency-wide Evidence Act Workgroup
- **June 2020:** COO and Administrator approved the Interim Learning Agenda Priority Questions

### Next Steps:

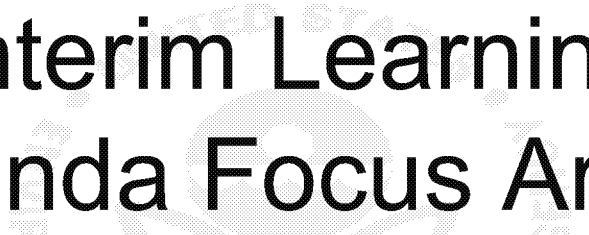
- **August 2020:** Decision on evidence-building activities for Interim Learning Agenda
- **September 2020:** Submit the Interim Learning Agenda with the OMB Submission

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# Interim Learning Agenda Focus Areas



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## Interim Learning Agenda Focus Area: Improving Drinking Water Compliance

- Drinking Water Learning Agenda (DWLA) Workgroup
  - Lead - Office of Compliance (OC)/OECA
  - Workgroup Members –OC, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW), and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- The Workgroup consulted with 20+ internal and external stakeholders
  - Drinking water organizations – State Drinking Water Administrators, USDA Rural Utility Service and American Water Works Association
  - Non-governmental organizations
  - Academics
  - Regional Directors from both Enforcement and Compliance Assurance and Water Divisions
- Workgroup identified 5 questions (research topics), explaining why question is important, what we already know and the gaps in knowledge

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## **Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)**



## Improving Drinking Water Compliance: Evaluation Plan Approach

### Types of Evaluation Activities

- Existing agency work/findings review
- Analysis of in-house data
- Outside dataset extraction and analysis
- Literature searches
- Randomized control studies
- Sample collection

### Draft Timeline

#### FY2021 and FY2022

1. Drinking water compliance data – foundational and the focus of FY2021
2. Root cause analysis – pre-cursor to answering other questions
3. Effect of inspection/enforcement – makes use of planned work beginning in FY2021

#### FY2023 and Beyond

4. Measures for water system capacity
5. EPA oversight of state programs

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## Improving Drinking Water Compliance: Opportunities and Challenges

- Answers to the 5 questions have been debated for decades, usually based on professional opinions, anecdotal examples, case studies and limited data sets.
- Answering these questions require that we go beyond the “exceptions” based data we have in our federal drinking water system.
- Answering these questions is not just a research task but requires senior leadership commitment to reach beyond the limited data we have.
- Doing some randomized control studies will be critical.

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## Interim Learning Agenda Focus Area: Workforce

### **Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Human Resource Learning Priority Workgroup
- Agency Evidence Act Workgroup
- National Programs and Regions conduction /supporting evidence-building activities
- External experts: OPM; IBM Center for the Business of Government; American University Center for Environmental Policy

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## **Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)**



## Interim Learning Agenda Focus Area: Workforce

### Approach:

- Two-phase approach divided into Interim Learning Agenda (IA) phase and Learning Agenda (LA) phase.
  - IA phase: short-term (FY2020-2022), initial fact finding and capabilities assessment
  - LA phase: long-term (FY2022-beyond), fact finding, strategy development and implementation
- IA and LA questions will be divided into subsets of questions that can guide specific activities for answering the questions (e.g. market research, data collection and analysis, EPA systems audit & evaluation, etc.)



## Interim Learning Agenda Focus Area: Grant Commitments Met

- Stakeholder Engagement:
  - **Internal** – NPMs and Regions
  - **External** - ECOS, ASTHO, NASDA, ACWA, ASDWA, ASTSWMO, and NAACA

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## **Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)**





# Questions / Discussion

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